

TEBBE Mundy House
Dumfries
PRINCE William County
Virginia

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

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2TEBBS HOUSE
Dumfries, Prince William County, VirginiaDate of erection: c. 1760Builder: Colonel Willoughby TebbsPresent condition: Destroyed 1933-4Description:

The Tebbs house was built on the side of a steep hill, with the approach from the down-hill side. This allowed a full lighted basement, which was treated with stone ashlar on the facade. Above the basement the building was of brick with stone dressings. On the front the bricks were laid in all-header bond, a practice employed in Maryland, but its use here is perhaps unique in Virginia. The building was five bays long with a center door. Nine-over-nine-light sash occurred in the lower windows; six-over-nine in the upper. All windows on the facade had stone flat arches, and the upper center window had rusticated quoin strips with a flat arch over. Rusticated quoins appeared on the corners of the building, and at the second-floor line was a stone string course. The doorway was arched, with a stone archivolt resting on Doric pilasters. That this composition looked incomplete makes it seem not unreasonable to consider that it was planned to be contained within a wood porch. The roof was hipped, with ridge chimneys, and there was a full modillioned cornice. The great flight of stone steps to the front door was a feature of the house.

The interior had a central hall with one large room to the left and two smaller rooms to the right. The trim of the large room included a paneled dado, modillioned cornice, and frontispiece mantel. This latter had an eared architrave, pulvinated frieze carved with leaves, and an eared overmantel panel below a pediment. This woodwork was removed by the Arden Studios and built in a house in New York City.

An interesting element of the house lay in the floor construction. This is described in Nicholson's dictionary and is called a "Carcase Floor." It was composed of a triple system of structural members called bridging, binding and ceiling joists as well as heavy girders.

Additional data:

Before its partial destruction in the storm of August 1933 and its subsequent demolition, the Tebbs house stood as almost a unique survivor of the eighteenth-century mansions of Dumfries.

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Established by an act of the Assembly in 1749, the seat became an important port and populous center of the country between Fredericksburg and Alexandria. During its heyday it had streets of fine buildings, such as the Inn, which is still standing. After the silting of the harbor the town declined in importance and, when the county seat was moved, lost its last raison d'etre. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century a destructive fire consumed most of the eighteenth-century buildings, and quite recently the court house was destroyed.

The date of the Tebbs house was based on a fireback dated 1762. This seems a reasonable date, from the architectural evidence. The name of the architect is not known, but speculation would include that of William Buckland, the indentured artisan who was brought to this country in 1755 to work on the construction of Gunston Hall for George Mason. His indenture was up in 1760, and he is supposed to have designed several houses in the vicinity, including one at Occoquan for John Ballendine. Subsequently he went to Annapolis, where he built a group of fine mansions and became a distinguished citizen of the city.

References:

Holden and Coffin, Brick Architecture of Maryland and Virginia

Virginia Guide

Great Georgian Houses

Encyclopedia of Architecture, Peter Nicholson, New York (no date, c. 1850)

Author:

Thomas Waterman

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